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KING ARTHUR AND KING CORNWALL.

AMONG the most interesting of the English and Scottish Ballads is the fragmentary *King Arthur and King Cornwall*,¹ printed as No. 30 in Professor Child's monumental collection. The only extant version of this semi-romance² was taken by Professor Child from the first part of the Percy Ms.,³ which had undergone extensive mutilation at the hands of the domestic servants of Humphrey Pitt, Esq., of Shropshire. Bishop Percy did not include it among the forty-five pieces extracted from the Ms. for the *Reliques*, and it appears to have been published for the first time in Madden's *Syr. Gawayne*.⁴ Incomplete as this version of the ballad is,⁵ there yet remains enough of it to enable us to follow the thread of the action, while some incidents can be studied in considerable detail. The story runs about as follows.⁶ (Arthur, apparently boasting at some feast or festival,⁷ addresses Gawain and says) that the latter shall see one of the fairest round tables that he ever saw. Guinevere takes up the king's boast, says that she knows of a round table that is worth four of Arthur's, and proceeds to describe its magnificence. Arthur's curiosity is aroused,

¹ Percy's title.

² V. Child, I, 257.

³ V. Hales and Furnivall, Percy Ms., I, 59 ff.

⁴ 1839, pp. 275 ff.

⁵ There are stanzas lacking both at the beginning and at the end and there are several large gaps within the ballad itself. (These gaps are apparently equal in length ($\frac{1}{2}$ page each) to the fragments that remain.) Many single lines are likewise missing. In its present form the piece contains some seventy-seven stanzas and must have embraced originally at least twice that number.

⁶ I enclose between brackets such information, etc., as must necessarily be supplied to fill the gaps above noticed.

⁷ One is inclined to dissent somewhat from H. & F., p. 60, 'King Arthur's character is saved from any imputation of braggadocio.'

and he asks where this round table may be. Upon her refusal to tell him, he vows to God that he will not sleep two nights in the same place until he sees it. He, Sir Marramiles, and Sir Tristram¹ disguise themselves in palmers' weeds, and in that costume

'they rived east and the' rived west
In many a strange country.'

(About three lines on occurs the first break, which may reasonably be conjectured to comprise eight or ten stanzas. We may infer from the verses quoted above, as well as from stanzas 21 and 46,² that Arthur's wanderings were extensive and that he spent much time in visiting shrines in accordance with his assumed character. At length he arrives) before a castle, at the gate of which stands a proud porter, gorgeously arrayed; to whom Arthur—'I will give you the better of the two rings on my finger if you will tell me who is the Lord of the Castle.' 'King Cornwall, the richest king in the world,' replies the porter. 'Pray him for one night's lodging, two meals' meat, and a sage departure in the morning,' says Arthur. The porter goes to King Cornwall and begins his tale (when the second gap occurs. Arthur and his companions are admitted and we must suppose, although nothing is said about it, that King Cornwall is the possessor of the round table. After some talk with the pilgrims, Cornwall says)

'Did you ever know a comely king
His name was King Arthur?'

Arthur replies that he has seen him, whereupon Cornwall

¹ We learn later, also Sir Bredbeddle (concerning whom V. Child 1, 280. He is called in the ballad 'the greene knyghte,' and H. & F. identify him with the hero of the Romance of that name. V. p. 61) and Sir Gawain.

² St. 21,

our Lady was borne.

then thought cornewall King these palmers had
beene in Brittain.'

St. 46,

'he found it at the sea-side,
wruoked upp in a floode;
Our lord had written it with his hands,
& sealed it with his bloode.' V. Child, 279.

—‘I have had a daughter by his wife and she is a most beautiful lady.’ ‘She is indeed,’ says Arthur. Then bespake Cornwall—‘Go fetch me down my wonderful steed, on which I can ride thrice as fast as Arthur on his best horse.’ ‘Truly a remarkable beast,’ says the latter. (Here the third gap. Arthur is shown a wonderful horn and an equally remarkable sword, possibly also a household demon, familiar yet most terrible of aspect, entitled *Burlew-beanie*.) Arthur and his followers, overcome by this display of magnificence, are conducted to their chamber, and *Burlew-beanie* is placed in a barrel (?)¹ by Arthur’s bedside for the purpose of reporting the guests’ conversation to his master.’ Arthur says that he will be the bane of Cornwall. Gawain remarks that this is a rash vow, whereupon Arthur taunts him with cowardice. Gawain, to clear himself from this imputation, vows that he will have ‘yonder faire lady’ to Little Britain² and there work his will with her. (Gap four. Apparently *Marramiles* and *Tristram* make boasts regarding the sword and horn.) *Bredbeddle* boasts that he will do battle with *Burlew-beanie*. At this point in some unknown fashion, *Bredbeddle* becomes aware that the fiend is enclosed in the barrel, which *Bredbeddle* immediately breaks open. *Burlew-beanie* comes forth and a combat ensues, in the course of which all of the knight’s weapons prove false; he finally, however, conquers the fiend by the aid of a little book, written by our Lord and sealed with his blood, that he has found in the course of his wanderings. (Gap five. *Bredbeddle* and the vanquished demon appear to hold a conversation, at the end of which) the former conjures his opponent for the time being into a wall of stone. (A slight inconsistency occurs here. We read in 31 that *Burlew-beanie* was placed by Arthur’s bedside. But from 48–50 we infer that Arthur did not witness the struggle, for *Bredbeddle* goes to him and

¹ ‘rub-chaddler’ is the word. V. Child on this passage.

² It is proper to remark that Arthur is in this ballad represented as king of Little Britain.

announces the outcome.) Arthur desires to see Burlow-beanie (has he not seen him already?) and so Bredbeddle brings him before the king. (Gap six. It is perhaps not necessary to narrate the remaining incidents in such detail.) Burlow-beanie fetches the horse at command and Marramilés essays to ride him but cannot until Burlow-beanie tells the secret of his management. Of Sir Gawain we hear nothing more. Sir Tristram attempts to blow the horn but is likewise unable to get on without the fiend's assistance. Finally the demon fetches the wonderful sword, with which Arthur cuts off Cornwall's head.

It will at once be remarked that the story outlined above bears a considerable resemblance to that of *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*. (I. p. 5.) Hales and Furnivall in their introduction to the ballad assume that the two stories are directly connected and discuss their relations on that basis. Professor Child, also, on the strength of the general similarity between the two stories, postulated direct filiation, concluding that the English ballad is a descendant of the French romance. This view is set forth on vol. I, pp. 274 ff. By turning however to III, 503 b, we discover that Professor Child altered this view in deference to that set forth by Gaston Paris in the *Hist. Lit. de la France*, XXX, 110 f. We can best get at Paris's position by approaching it from that of an earlier article of his in the *Pèlerinage* itself.²

Paris recognizes in P. C. two separate and distinct stories, only one of which had any original connection with Charlemagne: namely,—(a) the story of Charlemagne's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem; (b) the story of the King who makes the visit to his rival.³ The second of these belongs to a widely spread class of tales, the elements of which, according to Paris, are common Germanic,⁴ and which he characterizes in the following terms: 'un roi, qui se croit le plus noble et le plus magnifique du monde, entend dire qu'un autre le surpasse; il se rend à

¹ Ed. Koschwitz, Leipzig, 3d ed., 1895.

² Romania ix, 1 ff. (1880).

³ Rom., U. S., p. 8.

⁴ Hist. Lit., U. S.

sa cour pour s'en assurer, promettant, si ce n'est pas exact, de punir ceux qui se seront joués de lui.'¹

Entirely unconnected with the stories of this class was the story of Charlemagne's pilgrimage to Jerusalem,² which formed originally, as Paris inclines to think, the subject of an independent poem,³ upon which was grafted the alien rival-story. This grafting, a very skilful operation indeed, took place before the time of the first crusade (1095), and its result was the *Pèlerinage* in practically its present shape.⁴

In the *Hist. Lit.*, l. c. s., Paris discusses briefly the relations of P. C. and A. C. (Arthur and Cornwall).

'L'éditeur de l'admirable collection des ballades anglaises en cours de publication, M. Child, ne doute guère que la ballade dont il publie les fragments (après Madden) ne provienne de la chanson française; nous serions moins portés à l'admettre. Le roi qui en va visiter un autre dont on lui a vanté la magnificence, les "gabs," sont des lieux communs de la poésie germanique (et proprement scandinave), qui on fort bien pu, dans une forme où ils étaient déjà réunis, passer indifféremment en France et en Angleterre, et s'attacher dans un pays à Charlemagne, dans l'autre à Arthur. La ballade anglaise, comme toutes celles qui lui ressemblent, doit avoir pour base un poème antérieur d'une autre forme, et nous croirions volontiers que ce poème à son tour dérivait d'un poème anglo-normand. Nous avons vu plus haut, en analysant le roman de *Rigomer* qu'une donnée analogue au début du *Pèlerinage* de Charlemagne se retrouvait ailleurs dans les poèmes français du cycle d'Arthur.'

The *Rigomer*⁵ parallel, of which Paris speaks, need not detain us long, since it does not seem to be of a character to furnish any important evidence to the discussion of the connection of P. C. with A. C. It is true that it belongs to class *b*; it is true perhaps that the unlikeness⁶ which it

¹ Rom., p. 8.

² Rom., p. 15 ff.

³ Ibid., p. 8, note.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 15, 16, 43, etc.

⁵ Hist. Lit., xxx, pp. 92 f.

⁶ There is no question in R. of the inferiority of Arthur to any other king, but merely of the inferiority of Lancelot to Gawain. The dispute between

exhibits at once to P. C. and to A. C. necessitates the inference that it entered the Arthur Cycle quite independently. But this tells us little with regard to the relations of these two poems, and certainly does not exclude the possibility of close filiation between them.

On reverting to the English ballad, we find that Paris's argument, though he nowhere explicitly formulates it, seems to be somewhat as follows: A. C. exhibits a resemblance to the *b*-portion only of P. C., and that resemblance is not so close as to lead us to assume a direct connection between the two poems. Now it seems to me that (1) the resemblance is somewhat closer than Paris seems to think; (2) there are traces in A. C. of the *a*-portion of P. C. If this be done, then direct connection between the two poems appears to be established, since the conjecture may be dismissed that stories *a* and *b*, in the absence of such connection, should have been twice combined into wholes exhibiting minute resemblances to each other. Nowadays, for instance, should a drama appear with a plot closely resembling Heywood's *Captives*, we should conclude that its author drew from that play, since we should regard the chance of an independent combination of the *Rudens* with the old French fabliau¹ as a very remote contingency.

Concerning ourselves for the moment only with the former of the above postulates, do we not find a very close agreement between these two versions of the same theme? We have the king boasting before his court in both versions. In each the person who depreciates him is his own queen. In each the king

Arthur and Guinivere moreover is not the occasion of the former's expedition, but simply of Lancelot's accompanying him in place of Gawain. If then we can connect P. C. and A. C., R. will go to show that, *possibly* anterior to the composition of the ballad, independent stories of a somewhat similar character were connected with the Arthur Cycle and that thereby the taking over of the Charlemagne story may have been facilitated. In other words, that stories of class *b* probably entered the Arthur Cycle in two ways at least. It does not seem to show more than this.

¹ V. Kittredge, JOURNAL OF GERM. PHIL., II, 13,

resolves to make the journey to discover his rival in company with his own peers, and in the same disguise.¹ In each case on reaching his rival's castle the king is overwhelmed by the magnificence of his reception and by the splendors of his rival's court.² In each case the rival king sets a spy upon his guests to overhear what they shall say in their own apartments, and in both cases the spy is concealed in much the same manner.³ In each case the king begins the 'gabs.'

Moreover every gab in A. C. has its analogue in P. C. Arthur vows that he will be the bane of Cornwall and finally cuts off his head with a magic sword. So Charlemagne boasts that he will pass his sword through an armed man and his horse under him deep into the ground.⁴ Gawain boasts that he will work his will with Cornwall's daughter. So Oliver with Hugo's.⁵ Maramides vows that he will ride the wonderful steed. Compare Turpin's extraordinary performance in P. C.⁶ Tristram will blow the marvelous horn. So Roland will blow down all the gates in the city, to say nothing of the beard off King Hugo's chin.⁷

There are also minor parallels. The spy in A. C. 32 is to go to King Cornwall *before day*. So 'l'escolte' in P. C., 618 ff., when the counts have finished boasting and *are asleep*, goes out of his hiding-place and informs Hugo, *lying in bed*,⁸ of the boasts made by Charlemagne and his companions. Compare also Gawain's boast—

37. 'Ile make mine avow to God,
And alsoe to the Trinity,
That I will have yonder faire lady
To Little Brittain with mee.

¹ A. C., sts. 7-8; P. C., ll. 80-98.

² A. C., 30; P. C., 320 ff.; 362 ff.; 393 ff.; 448 ff.

³ A. C., 31; P. C., 439 ff.

⁴ A. C., 33, 76 f.; P. C., 453 ff.

⁵ Cf. A. C., 37-8 with 24; P. C., 485-492.

⁶ A. C., 59-67; P. C., 494 ff.

⁷ A. C., 69-73; P. C., 470 ff.

⁸ Cf. A. C., 76.

38. Ile hose her hourly to my heart,
 And with her Ile work my will ;'

with P. C., 404-7.

' Oliviers l'esguardat si la prist a amer ;
 Ploust al rei de gloire, de sainte majestet,
 Que la tenisse en France a Dun la citet ;
 Car jo'n fereie puis totes mes volonteiz.'

It is not to be denied that the two stories exhibit great differences; but in comparing a ballad, which has been subjected to all the vicissitudes of oral transmission, with a romance, it is rather of the resemblances than of the differences that we take note, unless the latter are of a more sweeping and fundamental character than in this instance they appear to be. After such a comparison as that just instituted, are we not justified in concluding that the two stories belong, not simply to the same general class, but to the same sub-division of that general class? This conclusion is further strengthened by comparing the two, not merely with each other, but with such similar tales as those noticed by Child, I, 279, note ‡; 283, note †; by Paris, *Rom.* IX, pp. 8-9. It is not necessary here to enter upon such a comparison. The one made above seems to point to a closer connection of our two stories with one another than is implied in the simple statement, undeniably true though it be, that their elements are common-places in Germanic poetry.

Before we draw our final conclusion, we must notice another set of parallels that have to do with the *a*-portion of the journey. It is this *a*-portion that Paris thinks to have been the chief motive in the mind of the composer, or redactor, of that poem.¹

Charlemagne and his retinue go as pilgrims to Jerusalem. Arthur and his companions put on palmers' weeds. It is perhaps worth noting that in no other English ballad does a king disguise himself as a palmer. This may or

¹ *Rom.*, I. c., 29; cf., however, Child, 282.

may not be significant, but it is curious that the only English ballad containing this motive is one that closely resembles a romance in which the same motive is very prominent. At any rate, this parallèl may be accepted as corroborative of the evidence presented below.

A. C., st. 9.

'There is noe outlandish man will us abide,
Nor will us come nye.'
Then they rived east and the' rived west,
In many a strange country.

Vv. 1-2 evidently refer to *heathen* men of some sort. The lines would have no meaning, or would be untrue, unless *heathen* men were meant and not *Christians*. The Century Dictionary's citation of this passage under *outlandish* = *foreign* seems clearly in error. There is no reason why simply foreign men should not abide them or come nigh on account of their palmer's garb. Arthur means that the divine power will protect them as palmer's against the heathen. This corresponds closely enough to the idea of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, then in the hands of the Turks. So ll. 3-4 of this stanza correspond rather well to the somewhat confused geography of P. C.¹ Furthermore from st. 21, we may infer that Arthur had been visiting shrines as well as hunting for his rival, which was exactly Charlemagne's own method of killing two birds with one stone.²

The author of P. C. bound his two stories together with some skill, and not the least ingenious of the devices he employed is that of making the relics gained in the pilgrimage perform their part towards enabling Charles and his peers to accomplish their gabs.³ The same link between the two stories exists in the English ballad. What is the point of the Charlemagne story? This, that Charles and his companions have made boasts that cannot possibly be accomplished, even by such redoubted champions as themselves. Hence, they are obliged to invoke divine assistance, which is granted them on account of the

¹ G. Rom., 26.

² V. note 2, p. 2.

³ V. ll. 667 ff.

relics in their possession and which they have gained on a pious pilgrimage.

The point of the English ballad is a very similar one. Arthur and his fellows have made boasts that they cannot fulfill. They are likewise compelled to invoke superhuman assistance, which they are enabled to obtain by virtue of a relic that they have found in the course of their pious pilgrimage. The correspondence is, it seems to me, quite as close as we should expect in the case of a ballad that has been subjected to oral transmission and to ancillary carelessness; and in virtue of it the hypothesis that P. C. and A. C. are independent of each other may be dismissed.

Nor does any *à priori* reason appear why these two should not be directly connected. P. C. was widely known and very popular,¹ and had special vogue apparently in Great Britain. There are three Welsh versions of it, while the sole authority for the old French text is an Anglo-Norman Ms.² The fact that the romance assumed ballad form should not surprise us.³

¹ V. Child, p. 275.

² Koschwitz, p. 1.

³ Paris notes* the curious coincidence between Hugo's agricultural pursuits and those of the Chinese Emperor. A coincidence equally curious and possibly of value for the history of P. C. is to be observed in the rural occupations of Othman, the first Ottoman Emperor. Von Ranke says,†— 'Gering genug beschreiben die Osmanen ihren Anfang. Sie erzählen, der Gründer ihres Reiches und Namens, Osman, habe noch selbst mit seinen Knechten gepflügt, und wenn er Mittag halten wollte, eine Fahne ausgesteckt, um sie zusammenzurufen. Keine andern seien seine ersten Kriegsgefährten gewesen, und unter demselben Zeichen seien sie versammelt worden.' Hugo was an Oriental monarch. Possibly he drove afield in imitation of his Ottoman forbear.

* Rom., p. 4, note.

† Die Osmanen und die Spanische Monarchie, Berlin, 1857, p. 3.

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